



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK

“Children Act Fast...So Do Poisons!”

Each year, children are poisoned by any number of household and personal care products, as well as medicines, vitamins, plants, pesticides, art supplies, alcohol, lead and carbon monoxide. The Mid America Poison Control Center and Safe Kids Kansas are partnering in observance of National Poison Prevention Week, March 19-25, to remind everyone that “Children Act Fast...So Do Poisons.”

The Mid-America Poison Control center in Kansas City received over 22,000 reports of poison exposures in 2005. Of these, 58 % involved children ages 5 and under. Children are at significantly greater risk than adults for accidental poisoning, because they are smaller, have faster metabolic rates and are less able physically to handle toxic chemicals. In addition, natural curiosity and their desire to put everything in their mouths increase their poisoning risk.

In 2005, the most frequent causes of poisonings reported to the Mid America Poison Control Center in children ages 5 and under were cosmetic/personal care products, household cleaning substances, topical medications, and analgesics.

“Although child-resistant packaging is credited with saving hundreds of children’s lives since its introduction, there is still no substitute for active supervision and childproofing.” says Jan Stegelman, Coordinator of Safe Kids Kansas. “If a label says ‘keep out of reach of children, there’s a reason. Keep it up high and in a locked cabinet.”

Parents and caregivers should also be prepared in the event of a poisoning. Keep the Poison Control Center hotline number handy – keep it beside every phone in your home and program it into your cell phone. Follow the center’s instructions. Do not induce vomiting or give the child any fluid or medication unless directed by the poison control center.

Poison Control Center

National Toll-Free Number – 1-800-222-1222

This number will connect you directly to your local poison control center.

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www.safekids.org www.kansassafekids.org

Safe Kids Kansas and the Mid America Poison Control Center offer these prevention tips:

- *Store medications locked out of children's sight and reach.* Don't leave medicine in your purse or an unlocked kitchen or bathroom cabinet and don't put it on a kitchen or bedside table. Never leave medicines or potentially poisonous household products unattended while you are using them and never leave out loose pills.
- *Be safe when taking or administering medication.* Always read labels, follow directions and give medicines to children based on their weights and ages. Only use the dispensers packaged with children's medications. Avoid confusion by keeping all medicines and potentially poisonous household products in their original packages.
- *Don't refer to medicine or vitamins as candy.* Children should not think of therapeutic substances as treats. Also, don't involve children as "helpers" with your medication. They should not remind you to take medicine or bring you water, for example.
- *Stay alert while using cleaning products.* A child can be poisoned in a matter of seconds. Never leave kids alone with an open container of something you wouldn't want them to ingest. Check your garage, basement and other common storage areas for cleaning and work supplies that you do not use or no longer need and dispose of these items.
- *Beware of certain cosmetics and personal products.* In addition to medicines, children may be tempted to taste cosmetics and personal care products. Store items such as after-shave, cologne, perfume, hair spray, shampoo, artificial fingernail remover and fingernail polish remover out of reach.
- *Buy child-resistant packaging.* Child-resistant caps do not guarantee that children cannot open a container, but they do increase the time that you have to stop them before they swallow a poison.
- *Discuss these precautions with grandparents and relatives.* Grandparents may have medications that can be very dangerous of children, and their homes might not be as well childproofed as yours.
- *Follow the advice of the poison control center specialist.* Do not induce vomiting or give the child any fluid or medication unless directed by the poison control center. Ipecac syrup should no longer be used as a home treatment strategy.

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National Poison Prevention Week/3333

- *Install a carbon monoxide detector in every sleeping area.* Carbon monoxide is an invisible odorless gas that can make a child seriously ill in concentrations that would barely affect an adult.

For more information, please visit www.safekids.org or www.kumed.com/poison.

Safe Kids Kansas, Inc. is a nonprofit Coalition of 67 statewide organizations and businesses dedicated to preventing accidental injuries to Kansas children ages 0-14. Local coalitions and chapters are located in Allen, Anderson, Atchison, Clay, Dickinson, Doniphan, Douglas, Ellis, Ford, Franklin, Geary, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Leavenworth, Marion, Meade, Mitchell, Montgomery, Nemaha, Osage, Pottawatomie, Republic, Rice, Riley, Saline, Smith, Shawnee, Wabaunsee, Wilson and Woodson Counties, as well as the cities of Chanute, Emporia, Leavenworth, Norton, Pittsburg, the Wichita Area and the Metro Kansas City Area. Safe Kids Kansas a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations whose mission is to prevent accidental childhood injury.

www.kansassafekids.org

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